

# LANGUAGE CHANGE IN A CREOLE CONTINUUM: DECREOLIZATION?

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## INTRODUCTION

DECREOLIZATION IS TYPICALLY VIEWED as the process through which a creole language gradually merges with its lexifier language, i.e., the standard language of the community, as a result of creole speakers' increased access to and "targeting" of the latter (Andersen 1983, Bickerton 1975, DeCamp 1971, Rickford 1983). The study of this process, largely motivated over the last twenty years by questions about the consequences of language contact and the nature of language change, has made less mysterious the extensive linguistic variation observed in contemporary creole communities. Specifically, the proposal that synchronic variation reflects diachronic change in systematic ways (Weinreich, Labov & Herzog 1968) has received considerable support in cross-sectional investigations (see, e.g., Bickerton 1973 & 1975, DeCamp 1971, Rickford 1979). Perhaps because these studies have yielded significant insights into the systematicity of variation in creole settings, it has been assumed rather than demonstrated that their findings reflect how decreolization actually occurs in real time. Yet, as researchers (e.g., Meisel, Clahsen & Pienemann 1981) in the field of second language acquisition have convincingly shown, important aspects of interlanguage development can be distorted or inadequately described in cross-sectional studies. Among creolists, Rickford (1983) has discussed this problem most extensively and emphasized the need for longitudinal studies to document actual patterns and rates of change.

The present paper reports on such a study of Hawai'i's creole continuum, focusing on (1) the decreolization rates of different linguistic and discorsal features; (2) the proposal that substantial decreolization occurs, not over the lifetimes of individuals (as in the case of "normal" second language

acquisition), but across generations of speakers (Rickford 1983); and (3) the role of political and sociopsychological factors in decreolization. The first and second issues will be addressed through quantitative analysis of longitudinal data from four Hawai'i Creole English (HCE) speakers.<sup>2</sup> The third will draw upon this writer's analysis, based on participant-observation, of recent public controversies involving HCE.

While cross-sectional studies as early as DeCamp's (1971) on the Jamaican continuum have examined a wide range of linguistic variables (e.g., pronouns, tense-modality-aspect markers, and negative constructions), few have directly addressed the question of differential patterns of decreolization. The most explicit finding comes from work by Escure (1981) in Belize, who reported that morphosyntactic but not phonological variables were decreolizing extensively. More recently, Mühlhäusler (1986) has called for greater attention to "global" rather than "local" phenomena in decreolizing systems, in light of clear evidence that changes in one linguistic domain, e.g., the lexicon, have repercussions in other domains, e.g., phonology. Such multilevel interactions have already been detailed in interlanguage development (e.g., Sato 1986 and 1990), thereby strengthening the motivation for examining them more closely in decreolization. Confirmation of the (admittedly limited) cross-sectional findings is viewed here as the next step in determining, ultimately, the causes of variability in decreolization rates.

The question of rate must also be considered in terms of the link between societal and individual characterizations of decreolization. Rickford (1983: 302) has convincingly argued for a 'quantitative model which indicates that the primary impact of decreolization might be in the declining proportion of people who speak the creole or basilectal variety, rather than in any decline in the 'purity' of that variety itself.' In other words, decreolization as a group phenomenon involves the gradual loss of varieties, beginning at the basilectal end of the continuum and continuing with mesolectal varieties, due to a historical decline in the number of speakers using these varieties.

At the level of the individual, this societal pattern could result primarily from substantial numbers of speakers shifting toward the acrolect within their lifetimes, or it could be due instead to the appearance of new generations of

speakers who acquire mesolectal and acrolectal rather than basilectal varieties. Cross-sectional work on Guyanese Creole by Rickford (1983) indicates that the latter, in fact, contributes more significantly to the societal pattern. Rickford (*ibid.*) reports substantive differences across generations of speakers, i.e., between basilectal parents and their children, rather than in the same speaker at different times. Here, then, is another cross-sectional finding that warrants confirmation with longitudinal data from basilectal speakers.

The third issue treated in this paper continues to be debated by creolists, with one perspective limiting the domain of inquiry to language-internal mechanisms of change (Bickerton 1975, 1977, 1980) and another arguing that social and psychological factors in creole communities affect the process of decreolization in crucial (and currently poorly understood) ways (e.g., LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985, Mühlhäusler 1986, Rickford 1983 and 1987, Romaine 1988). Support for the latter view will be provided in this paper through an analysis of recent public controversies involving Hawai'i Creole English (HCE), whose purpose is to illustrate how critical institutional events perceived by creole speakers as attacks on their personal and social identity may actually serve to decelerate decreolization.

### HAWAII'S ETHNOLINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

HAWAII'S POPULATION OF A LITTLE OVER A MILLION is unique among the 50 US states in that no single ethnic group comprises a majority. Most Islanders are of Asian and Pacific island rather than European or African origin. The population is approximately 27% Caucasian, 23% Japanese, and 11% Filipino. Pure native Hawaiians amount to about .7%, although part-Hawaiians amount to almost 17%. The remainder of the population includes a sizable group of non-Hawaiian persons of mixed ancestry (11%), as well as much smaller numbers of Chinese, Africans, Koreans, Puerto Ricans, Samoans, and others (Schmitt 1982).

This cultural mix is largely the result of massive labor importation during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In this period, thousands of Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese, and Filipinos (among others) were brought by north Americans to work on their sugar plantations. Sugar rapidly became 'king'

(Fuchs 1961, Kent 1983) in what had originally been a native Hawaiian kingdom with a subsistence agricultural economy. This economic takeover was soon followed by the islands' formal incorporation into the US, with the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, annexation in 1898, and statehood in 1959.

The plantations also brought a new social order. The native Hawaiian population was physically and culturally decimated (Trask 1984/1985). By the end of the 19th century, they amounted to only one-fifth of the population (Reinecke 1935/1969) and were outnumbered by the major immigrant labor groups. All lived and worked within the ethnically stratified plantation society controlled by Caucasian owners.

Sugar dominated Hawai'i's economy until the mid-1950s. Since then tourism and, to a lesser extent, the US military and civil service bureaucracies have taken its place. Significantly, the plantation social hierarchy now has its counterpart in the ethnic stratification of workers in the tourist industry, aptly characterized as "a new kind of sugar" (Kent 1974). Today, Hawai'i's middle class is primarily Caucasian and Asian, while the working class is largely composed of native Hawaiians, Filipinos and recent Asian and Pacific island immigrants (Kent 1983).

Extended contact among Hawai'i's native and immigrant peoples produced, first, a pidginized Hawaiian by the end of the 19th century, then a pidginized English during the early 1900s, and a flourishing creole by the 1920s (for detailed discussion, see Bickerton and Odo 1976, Bickerton and Wilson 1987, Day 1987, Reinecke 1935/69, and Sato 1985). Over the last half-century, industrialization, mass education, and urbanization have substantially increased the HCE-speaking population's exposure to American English, thereby setting the stage for widespread decreolization among HCE speakers. There is, after several years of research (see, e.g., Bickerton 1977 and 1981, Day 1972, Neff 1978, Odo 1975, Peet 1978, Perlman 1973, Purcell 1984, Sato 1978), abundant synchronic evidence of decreolization at the societal level. On the basis of the socioeconomic and linguistic evidence, one might reasonably expect to find most HCE speakers moving steadily toward the acrolect in Hawai'i's creole continuum. In fact, this process has been attenuated in some speakers, as will now be shown.

## DECREOLIZATION IN INDIVIDUALS: A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

IN THE LARGER STUDY from which the present data are taken, six male speakers of HCE were contacted and interviewed by a male HCE-speaking researcher. All had participated in Bickerton's major survey of Pidgin and Creole English in Hawai'i roughly fifteen years earlier (see Bickerton 1977, Bickerton and Odo 1976) and were selected for the follow-up study on the basis of their basilectal HCE. A preliminary analysis of conversational data from four of the six subjects, listed in Table 1, will be reported here.

Table 1. Subjects

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JA	Filipino, 61, Big Island (Hawai'i)
	Foreman for shipyard, former welder
	High school education
	Residence for the past 10 years: Maui
GN	Japanese, 45, Big Island
	Coffee farmer in Kona
	1 1/2 years of university
VV	Filipino, 56, Kaua'i
	Sugar plantation machine operator
	Completed 1 year of high school
	13 children
HK	Part-Hawaiian, 51, Kaua'i
	Welder, musician, former lifeguard

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At the end of the data collection session, each subject was asked by the interviewer for biographical information and was questioned about his work history and changes in his social networks over the last 15 years. All of the

speakers indicated increased and sustained contact with SE speakers, in their workplaces and/or in the community, during this period. A more detailed description of the nature of their exposure to SE would, of course, be required for any specific connection between social profiles and linguistic behavior to be drawn, but this is not the present objective. It is sufficient to point out here that these speakers have not been hermits or otherwise avoided contact with SE in any way. Rather, they appear to have lived in circumstances conducive to decreolization.

Although the total corpus of HCE interviews consists of approximately three hours of tape per subject, the present analysis is limited to a phonetically transcribed half-hour excerpt (the first half-hour of the session) for each subject, in which the following features are examined: (1) post-vocalic *r*, (2) indefinite reference as encoded in articles, and (3) past time reference for nonstative verbs. In each case, an increase in the percentage of standard English (SE) surface forms from Time 1 to Time 2 is viewed as evidence of decreolization.

The finding for post-vocalic *r*, as in the words *aboard* (abawd/abord) and *here* (hia/hir), is that little decreolization has occurred in the four speakers (see Table 2).<sup>3</sup> No one uses substantially more post-vocalic *r* at Time 2 than at Time 1 and the highest percentage of *r*-fulness at Time 2 is only 6% (for GN and VV). Moreover, even generally *r*-ful lexical items exhibited some variability.

Table 2. Post-Vocalic r

Subject	$\phi$		r		Total #
	#	%	#	%	
JA-T1 <sup>†</sup>	248	100	0	0	248
JA-T2 <sup>†</sup>	194	97	6	3	200
GN-T1	434	99	5	1	439
GN-T2	224	93	18	7	242
VV-T1	198	95	11	5	209
VV-T2	300	89	37	11	337
HK-T1	255	90	27	10	282
HK-T2	93	89	12	11	105

<sup>†</sup>T1 = Time 1 (1973), T2 = Time 2 (1986, 1988 or 1989)

Results for the analysis of past time reference with nonstative verbs reveal even more variation across the speakers. The variants of interest here are the following:

$\phi$	ai kaw $\phi$ wan taim 'I called once'
<i>bin</i>	aen hi <i>bin</i> bulshet mi 'and he bullshitted me'
<i>wen</i>	so wen da wahinez <i>wen</i> kam intavyu mi 'so when the women came to interview me'
<i>haed</i>	e mai sista <i>haed</i> krai yu no 'hey, my sister cried, you know'



*neva*            kawz ai *neva* laik haeng aut oa dea  
                      'because I didn't want to hang out over there'

Strong past and weak past tense verbs, e.g., *caught*, *wanted*

Two of the speakers, GN and VV, show a preference for SE variants at Time 2, whereas there is no appreciable increase for JA and a 20% decrease in SE forms for HK. In other words, only two of the four can be said to have decreolized with respect to the marking of past time on nonstative verbs. As has been widely reported in the SLA literature (e.g., Sato 1986) the verbs marked for SE past tense tend to be strong/irregular verbs rather than weak/regular verbs.

Table 3. Indefinite Reference

Subject	HCE		SE		Total #
	#	%	#	%	
JA-T1	11	35	20	65	31
JA-T2	37	73	14	27	51
GN-T1	33	75	11	25	44
GN-T2	22	49	23	51	45
VV-T1	14	78	4	22	18
VV-T2	17	44	22	56	39
HK-T1	52	73	19	27	71
HK-T2	17	58	12	41	29

It is also worth noting what appears to be non-decreolizing change in two speakers' use of HCE past time auxiliaries. First, VV seems to have shifted from *bin* to the Kaua'i variant *haed* (which HK also uses) between Time 1 and Time



2. VV attributes this shift to the influence of his children. Second, JA, one of the Big Island speakers, also decreases his use of *bin* at Time 2, but in favor of *wen*, which is the most widely used variant across the islands.

The analysis of indefinite reference involves the HCE  $\phi$ -article,  $\{\phi\}$  *wan*, and SE *a*, as in this example: *no kaen meik {wan} gaden* ('you can't make a garden'). Table 3 shows that three of the four speakers appear to have decreolized to some extent; that is, GN, VV, and HK show an increase of 26%, 34% and 14%, respectively, in their use of the SE variant. JA, however, shows a 38% decrease in SE *a* from Time 1 to Time 2.

As with past time reference, increased use of SE *a* parallels a pattern commonly observed in 'normal' SLA; that is to say, *a* tends to appear first and frequently in formulaic expressions such as *give a damn*.

Table 4. Past Time Reference (Nonstatives)

Subject	HCE		SE		Total #
	#	%	#	%	
JA-T1	11	35	20	65	31
JA-T2	37	73	14	27	51
GN-T1	33	75	11	25	44
GN-T2	22	49	23	51	45
VV-T1	14	78	4	22	18
VV-T2	17	44	22	56	39
HK-T1	52	73	19	27	71
HK-T2	17	58	12	41	29

Analysis of two other features, existential predication and *aeh*-tags, is still in progress but some tentative observations can be offered. In the case of

existential predication, encoded in utterance-initial *get* or SE expletive *there* (e.g., *aen den get faiv aen a haef eikaz oa hea*, 'and there are five and a half acres over here'), all four speakers strongly prefer the HCE variant at Time 2; only two speakers produced the expletive *there*, once each.

What can be said about *aeh*-tags is even more tentative. In HCE conversation these tags function mainly as confirmation checks roughly equivalent to SE utterance-final *you know* or *you see*, as in

yae bikawz ai chro frt aeh?  
'Yeah, because I throw fertilizer [i.e., fertilize sugar cane],  
you know?'

no, waz-waz lo taid aeh, aeswai  
'no, because it was low tide, you see'

Speakers use *aeh*, in other words, to keep the listener engaged, often during narrative sequences in conversation. This feature behaves differently from the others thus far examined in that only two (VV and JA) of the four speakers appear to use it frequently, and neither of them seems to be giving it up.

Returning to the three features for which quantitative results are available, the picture for decreolization appears to be the one sketched in Figure 1, with Post-vocalic *r* at the least decreolized end of the scale, indefinite reference at the other end, and past time reference in between. This result coincides with Escure's (1981) observation for Belize, that decreolization was more prominent in morphosyntactic than phonological features.

Figure 1. Relative Rates of Decreolization of Three Features



The variable results across speakers is also notable. JA appears to have decreolized the least among the four, showing a mere 3% increase for post-vocalic *r* insertion, no movement toward SE past time marking, and a preference for HCE variants in marking indefinite reference. In HK's data,

movement toward the acrolect is discernable for past time reference, but not for indefinite reference or post-vocalic *r* use. The other two speakers show a shift toward the acrolect in all three domains.

In sum, while there is some evidence of decreolization in these data, it is not much of a change over a 15-year period, and it seems plausible to conclude, following Rickford (1983), that extensive decreolization is not manifested in individuals during their lifetime. The claim here, of course, is that the speakers examined in this study are not unrepresentative of the basilectal HCE-speaking population. If this claim is correct, what accounts for the cross-sectional evidence of community-wide decreolization? Perhaps this is largely due to the behavior of mesolectal speakers, who may decreolize more rapidly and extensively than basilectal speakers do, owing to a "starting" point closer to the acrolect. Or, as Rickford (*ibid.*) claims, it is in fact the generation following that of the speakers examined here to whom the mesolectal to acrolectal shift should be attributed. Such questions will need to be addressed in future work. What will be taken up now is a related question: how the course of decreolization is affected by language-external factors in creole communities.

### THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF DECREOLIZATION

THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY as a marker of ethnic (actually, non-white) identity during the plantation era and of working class identity subsequently, HCE was heavily stigmatized (Reinecke 1935/1969, Sato 1985). Creole speakers have typically been ashamed of their speech, referring to it as "broken" or "bad" English, a bad habit that must be overcome in order to "succeed" in life. Studies of language attitudes in Hawai'i have repeatedly reported predominantly negative attitudes toward HCE on the part of creole and non-creole speakers alike (e.g., Day 1980, McCreary 1986, Yamamoto 1982; see Sato 1991 for review). Only in its more recent crystallization as a marker of a pan-ethnic, "local" (vs. the mainland US) identity has HCE acquired overt prestige, at least among some segments of the community. Moreover, as the following account of public controversies will illustrate, a somewhat militant stance against the replacement of HCE by SE in public domains has emerged. This is a remarkable trend, if one considers the extensive socialization toward all

things American that Islanders have actively colluded in or had imposed on them for several generations.

In the fall of 1987 a major debate about the status of HCE was provoked by the state Board of Education's (BOE)<sup>4</sup> attempt to implement a SE-only policy in the schools and by a civil rights discrimination lawsuit brought against the US National Weather Service by two local meteorological technicians. Only a brief sketch of these events follows, since the main point here is simply to illustrate how social forces can dramatically problematize language use in a decreolizing community (for more detailed discussion, see Sato 1989, 1991 and in preparation, Watson-Gegeo 1990).

The language policy originally proposed by a sub-committee of the BOE stated:

Standard English will be the mode of oral communication for students and staff in the classroom setting and all other school related settings except when the objectives cover native Hawaiian or foreign language instruction and practice' (Hawai'i Board of Education memorandum, August 1987).

Board members apparently thought their action would be favorably received by the community.<sup>5</sup> Much to their consternation, reaction came immediately from several quarters, including parents, teachers, university faculty, native Hawaiian and other community activists, and even some elements of the mass media. The proposed policy was perceived as discriminatory, i.e., as an unfair attack on HCE, on local culture and on the educational rights of local people. Researchers, mainly from the University of Hawai'i's Department of English as a Second Language, criticized the Board's unprofessional rejection of research in creole languages, second language acquisition, and language teaching, which uniformly discredited the assumptions and directives of the policy (Sato 1989). All of these objections were raised at what proved to be a historic four-hour evening meeting held by the board to receive public testimony.

The meeting was packed with over 100 people, as well as news crews from the three major TV stations and various newspapers. All but a few who offered testimony on the policy vigorously opposed it, some through academic argument, others through HCE poetry recitation, and still others through

political oratory. All of the "opposition" speakers received rousing applause and cheers from the audience. Never before in Hawai'i's history had such a diversity of voices been raised, in a formal institutional setting, in defense of Hawai'i Creole English. Taken aback by this extraordinary display of feeling against the policy, the Board eventually adopted a much weaker version which simply "encouraged" the modeling of SE by teachers and staff members in the Department of Education.

The publicity generated by this event was unprecedented. Letters flooded the newspapers, and radio talk shows and TV news programs covered the controversy every day for a week in September. One of the two major daily newspapers commissioned a special week-long series on HCE, which proved informative and generally quite supportive of HCE as a marker of local identity (see Brislin 1987, Hartwell 1987, Hollis 1987, Keir 1987, Matsunaga 1987, Reyes 1987a-g).

The language policy debate coincided with what was perhaps a more critical event concerning the civil rights of HCE speakers: A lawsuit (*Kahakua et al. v. Hallgren*) against the National Weather Service which went to trial during the same week the BOE language policy was debated. The NWS was charged with, among other things, race and national origin discrimination. US civil rights legislation prohibits discrimination in federal employment on the basis of race or national origin, the latter including not only an individual's or his or her ancestor's place of origin, but also physical, cultural or linguistic characteristics of an individual which are attributable to a national origin group (*Appellants' Opening Brief, Kahakua et al. v. Friday*, 1988).

The plaintiffs were two male meteorological technicians, a part-Hawaiian American and a Japanese-American (hereafter referred to as J and G, respectively), who had born and raised in Hawai'i, and who had worked for the NWS for several years. J and G applied for vacancies, one in April 1985 and another in October 1986, in the Public Service Unit of the NWS's Honolulu office. On both occasions, they were required to submit (contrary to established NWS hiring procedures) an audiotaped weather forecast as part of their applications,<sup>6</sup> and on each occasion, a young Caucasian far less qualified than either J or G and with a mainland American English accent was hired. In the

suit, J and G claimed that their candidacies were downgraded because of their HCE accents and in spite of their superior qualifications and exemplary employment records with the NWS. The NWS countered that the Caucasians had been selected because they 'sounded better' than J and G.

Newspaper headlines about the case, such as 'suit says men rejected because of "pidgin" use' (Oshiro 1987) and 'complaints about "pidgin" told in job bias trial' (Wiles 1987), gave the impression that J and G spoke basilectal, i.e., unintelligible to mainland US ears, creole. Expert witness testimony by the present writer countered this view on the basis of phonetic analysis of taped weather forecasts by J and G, such as those they had submitted to the NWS (Sato 1987). The following HCE features were observed in their speech, given here in decreasing order of their frequency in the transcripts examined:

1. Full vowels where many mainland varieties of English reduce vowels: e.g., /u/ rather than /ə/ in *today*;
2. /d/ where many mainland varieties of English have /ð/, as in *with*;
3. Monophthongs where many mainland varieties of English have diphthongs: e.g., /o/ rather than /ou/ in *low*; and
4.  $\phi$  where many mainland varieties of English have alveolar /r/, as in *afternoon*.

Whereas (1) and (2) were frequent for both J and G, (3) and (4) were rare, i.e., the SE variants were usually produced. These results, along with an analysis of conversational speech from both men, showed that they were far from basilectal in the data examined. It was entirely possible, of course, that J and G were capable of basilectal HCE. However, the crucial point was that, in performing their professional duties, they used standard Hawai'i English of the sort spoken by the majority of highly educated, locally born professionals, including the state's part-Hawaiian Governor and Filipino Lieutenant Governor.

At the end of three-and-a-half days of testimony, the judge brought in from California for the trial announced his ruling: The NWS had not



discriminated against G and J. He even suggested that the men put more effort into improving their speech. The suddenness of his ruling, immediately following closing arguments, surprised everyone, as it is common practice decisions to be issued several weeks following trial. G and J subsequently filed an appeal in the US Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (in San Francisco, California), but in 1989 the original ruling was upheld. They have since decided not to pursue matters any further, an understandable decision in the face of a legal climate that is overwhelmingly hostile to language diversity and challenges to the sociolinguistic status quo.

Although the discrimination case received far less publicity than did the BOE language policy, and newspaper accounts tended to present the crux of the case as a matter of 'good' vs. 'bad' English, a surprising degree of public support for J and G's position became evident. Listeners who heard G interviewed on the radio called in to comment on how well he in fact spoke and asked 'what all the fuss was about anyway'. Several of this writer's friends, family members, and colleagues at the university had similar reactions upon watching G perform a weather forecast on TV. Perhaps the most troubling aspect of the case was keenly felt by local professionals (e.g., teachers, lawyers, news reporters) who speak like J and G: That they, whatever their substantive qualifications, were vulnerable to discrimination simply because of a HCE accent.

While no large-scale survey data can be offered as yet on public reaction to this case or the BOE language policy, it is clear that these events have at least raised the community's awareness of what is at stake in retaining HCE. While some HCE speakers may strive even harder to acquire a mainland US accent, others appear prepared to publicly defend and maintain, not only a creole accent, but other features of HCE as well. In Milroy's (1982) terms, a solidarity ideology has emerged in Hawai'i, partly, it is argued here, as a result of a political crisis. After a half-century of decreolization, it seems that those who might otherwise subscribe to a status-based interpretation of linguistic diversity in Hawai'i, i.e., one which assigns prestige exclusively to SE, have been moved to reject it in favor of one which more accurately reflects the social and political reality of their lives.

Hawai'i may have entered a phase described by Rickford (1983) as an



intermediate stage of decreolization which may be maintained for generations because of sociopsychological factors favoring creole maintenance, even by speakers who have added an acrolectal variety to their repertoire. If the events described above have in fact politicized a sizable number of individuals, stylistic shifting may be significantly restructured in public domains. More than ever before, intraspeaker variation along Hawai'i's continuum will be describable as "acts of identity" by creole speakers (LePage and Tabouret-Keller 1985), who are subject throughout their lives to the tensions inherent in post-colonial capitalist societies.

Hypotheses about the future course of decreolization can be derived, at least in general terms, from recent governmental projections about Hawai'i's economy and plans to ensure its continued 'growth.' Tourism, Hawai'i's primary industry, 'is predicted to grow 2 1/2 times faster than the labor force, in a state already experiencing labor shortages in 1990' (Watson-Gegeo 1990: 18). Workers will be needed to fill jobs in expanded trade and service sectors, jobs which will not, by the government's own admission, pay well (Pai 1990). Since local workers could not survive on the low wages to be offered, the industry will resort to a familiar solution: Massive labor importation.

Demographic effects by the year 2010 are predicted to include a 23% population increase in Honolulu and, more notably, an 81% increase in the neighbor islands, precisely the areas in which 'HCE is the most widespread and least decreolized' (Watson-Gegeo 1990:19). At least 25% of the immigrants are expected to come from Southeast Asia and various Pacific islands. Most of these will not speak English and, depending on circumstances surrounding their arrival, are likely to acquire HCE or participate in its repidginization.

Perhaps as important to the course of decreolization as labor importation will be the maintenance of socioeconomic stratification by the tourist industry. Class lines will be more sharply drawn than they have been over the last quarter of a century, and it would be surprising for HCE not to have a unifying influence among the multiethnic workforce, just as it did a century ago on the sugar plantations.

## CONCLUSION

IN THE DECADES TO COME, the process of decreolization in Hawai'i will be subject to a new configuration of influences, both linguistic and non-linguistic. It is the interaction of the influences, rather than the dominance of one or the other, that requires attention in future work in this area. Hopefully, this paper has succeeded in demonstrating the value of real-time studies of this process, not as a substitute for cross-sectional studies, but as a means of revealing patterns and rates of change that cross-sectional studies cannot easily capture. It should be uncontroversial to suggest at this point that ecologically valid accounts of language change in creole continua must go beyond strictly linguistic constraints on decreolization. Ideally, they should examine how these constraints are neutralized, if they are, by the social marking of HCE features or particular types of features (e.g., prosodic as opposed to morphological). How best to accommodate the social-psychological dimensions of linguistic variation to the study of decreolization remains a problem, of course, but not an insurmountable one. It may be a reasonable starting point to think of decreolization as only one direction of change in a creole community.

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